(f) whether it is in public interest and the criteria thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) and (b) Government has, through the notification dated 7th May, 2003 (copy available in Ministry's website), specified Rs. 72/- (plus taxes) at the maximum amount which a cable operator in the four metros may demand from a subscriber for receiving the programmes transmitted in the basic service tier consisting of not less than 30 free-to-air channels of different genres of entertainment, news, sports, children's programmes and music.

(c) and (d) The Task Force, constituted in January, 2003 has made recommendations on the size, genre-wise mix of channels to be included and the cost of 'basic service tier' of 'Free-to-Air' channels.

(e) and (f) Since concerns had been expressed in various quarters about the arbitrary and unilateral hike in the monthly cable subscription charges, and it was felt that viewers shall have a choice of viewing channels, viewing of pay channels through an Addressable System was made mandatory in public interest. The main objectives of such a system were:—

* To save the consumers from arbitrary and exorbitant hikes in subscription rates;
* To enable the consumers to choose and pay for only those pay channel which they wish to watch.
* To bring in transparency in the figures of subscriber base and thereby improve revenue collections.

Setting up of Interim Broadcast Regulator

592. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the radio broadcast policy committee in its draft report has recommended setting up of an Interim Broadcast Regulator till the Convergence Commission is set up;

(b) if so, the Government's reaction thereon; and

(c) the details of the recommendations made by the Committee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) The Committee has recommended the constitution of an independent Broadcast Regulator. The Committee has also suggested that pending creation of a Regulator, a non-statutory committee be set up which has terms of reference similar to what the Regulator would have.

(b) The report of the Committee would be examined and appropriate decision would be taken thereon.

(c) The executive summary of the recommendations made by the committee is available on the Ministry's website (http/www.mib.nic.in).

Interest of consumers under CAS

593. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have shelved the Conditional Access System;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof;

(c) whether Government are aware that in the absence of any clear-cut directions the cable operators are exploiting the consumers; and

(d) the steps taken to protect the interest of consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) No such instance of exploitation has come to the notice of the Government. However, adequate safeguards have been provided under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and the Rules framed thereunder.

Film Broadcasting Policy

†594. SHRI KHAN GHUFRAN ZAHIDI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Doordarshan proposes to modify the Film Broadcasting Policy; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.